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Design Focused Engineering

County of Albemarle
Department of Community Development
401 McIntire Road, North Wing
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

RE: ZMA2020000012 Montclair
Request for Waiver from Section 14-422(D)
Block 1, Private Road "A" & "B", Block 3, Private Road "D" & "E" – Sidewalks

To Whom It May Concern,

Pursuant to Section 14-422(E), the Albemarle County Planning Commission may vary or except the requirements of sections 14-422 of the Subdivision Ordinance. The developer for Montclair (TMP 56-91A & TMP 56E-2) requests a waiver from the requirements of Section 14-422(A) which requires that the internal new streets in Block 1 and 3 include sidewalks on both sides of the new streets.

The application for Montclair seeks a rezoning from Light Industry and Rural Areas to a Neighborhood Model District. If approved, this NMD could develop a maximum of 157 units. Vehicular access through Block 1 is provided by Private Road "A" and Private Road "B." Residential units in Block 1 feature rear-loaded garages without sidewalks, effectively functioning as alleyways. Vehicular access through Block 3 is provided by Private Road "D" and Private Road "E." Residential units in Block 3 feature front-loaded garages, with sidewalks on one side. We request an exception for the sidewalk requirement along Private Roads "A," "B", "D," and "E". to more fully achieve an active streetscape towards the public streets and greenspace in the Montclair NMD.

With regard to the sidewalk waiver request, please consider the following analysis from Section 14-422(E)(2):

Block 1, Private Road A & B

(i) A variation or exception to allow a rural cross-section has not been granted.
(ii) A surface other than concrete is not proposed; this request is for a waiver from requirements to provide sidewalks on both sides of Private Road A and B.
(iii) Environmental constraints are not a factor in this waiver request as there are no environmentally sensitive features within Block 1.
(iv) Sidewalks are provided along Public Roads B and C, and one side of Private Roads D and E. Private Roads A and B are designed to function as alleyways, and their primary use is to provide vehicular access from public streets to residential garages. Homes along Private Road A and B intentionally do not face the street, rather, front porches are oriented towards shared greenspace and public roads. Similarly, pedestrian activity is facilitated towards the public streets and shared common areas to create a sense of place in the areas of neighborhood activity, rather than towards a swath of impervious area of driveways on both sides of the street.

(v) Residents of Montclair would be better served by sidewalks that are on the primary access public roads, to create a neighborhood environment of interaction and gathering. The pedestrian connections provided through the proposed amenity spaces and along public streets provide a public benefit by drawing pedestrians into these proposed greenspace areas.

(vi) Sidewalk connections along public streets and shared greenspace provide appropriate access to all residents in the Montclair NMD. Sidewalk connections along Private Roads A & B would only serve pedestrians that reside within Block 1, however, these sidewalk connections along Private Roads A & B would lead to the rear of the homes and garage/driveway areas, predominately serving vehicular access. Sidewalk connections for residents in Block 1 are proposed along the fronts and sides of the homes and towards greenspace areas, where residents would be encouraged to gather and overall contribute to a sense of place within the development.

(vii) The sidewalks would be privately maintained.

(viii) The waiver promotes the goals of the Crozet Master Plan. The land use of the property is designated by the Master Plan as Green Systems, Middle Density Residential, and Neighborhood Density Residential. The Master Plan recommends that Middle and Neighborhood Density developments design for up to 12 DUA (or 18 DUA with additional affordability) and 6 DUA, respectively. To meet the recommended density while providing high-quality and robust greenspace as well as a mixture of housing types and affordability, waiving of the sidewalks along Private Roads A and B allows for additional area to be utilized towards efficient site design while intentionally guiding pedestrian activity to shared amenity areas and public streets.

(ix) Waiving the requirement would enable different principles of the neighborhood model to be more fully achieved. For example, granting of this waiver would allow for pedestrians to be directed towards the streetscape, rather than functional alleys, promoting walkability and interconnectedness throughout this development. Sidewalks are provided towards amenity areas and along public streets. As recommended by the Future Street Network in the Master Plan, Public Road C is proposed to fulfill a public road and bike-ped connection to the neighboring property, Wickham Pond, which is designated as Neighborhood Center. Intentional sidewalk design along public streets and common areas contribute to overall neighborhood connectivity between Montclair and the adjacent Neighborhood Center, Wickham Pond.

Block 3, Private Road D & E

(i) A variation or exception to allow a rural cross-section has not been granted.

(ii) A surface other than concrete is not proposed; this request is for a waiver from requirements to provide sidewalks on both sides of Private Road D and E.

(iii) Environmental constraints are not a factor in this waiver request as there are no environmentally sensitive features within Block 3. Lots are only proposed on one side of the street, where sidewalks are to be provided.

(iv) Sidewalks are provided along Public Roads B and C, and one side of Private Roads D and E. Unlike homes along Private Roads A and B, residences along Private Roads D and E face the street, with driveway access to front-loaded garages. These units face the street and the common amenity space that is central to Block 3. To facilitate pedestrians from their homes

on Private Roads D and E, a sidewalk is provided along the fronts of the homes. This sidewalk connects to sidewalks on Public Road C, which provide access to the internal sidewalk connections and greenspace as well as to the neighboring parcel, Wickham Pond.

(v) The modification to the sidewalk requirement for Private Roads D and E would allow for a sidewalk on just one side of the street. While a sidewalk across the street, within the greenspace, may be utilized, it would not necessarily contribute to the overall sidewalk network of the NMD. Pedestrians who would like to access Block 3's amenity area would be able to access the amenity from the sidewalk along Public Road C, or walk across Private Roads D and E, which would experience low traffic volumes of low speeds. Moreover, requiring sidewalks on both sides of the street would create additional impervious hardscape to this central greenspace and would require additional grading to create a flat pad for installation. Residents of Block 3 would be better served by sidewalks that are one side of the street, immediately accessible from their homes. The pedestrian connections provided through the proposed amenity spaces and along public streets provide a public benefit by drawing pedestrians into these proposed greenspace areas.

(vi) Sidewalk connections along public streets and shared greenspace provide appropriate access to all residents in the Montclair NMD. Sidewalks along one side of Private Roads D & E provide adequate pedestrian access for Block 3 residents. A sidewalk connection within the greenspace area does not necessarily improve the proposed sidewalk connections, as a sidewalk is present along the Public Road C frontage.

(vii) The sidewalks would be privately maintained.

(viii) The waiver promotes the goals of the Crozet Master Plan. The land use of the property is designated by the Master Plan as Green Systems, Middle Density Residential, and Neighborhood Density Residential. The Master Plan recommends that Middle and Neighborhood Density developments design for up to 12 DUA (or 18 DUA with additional affordability) and 6 DUA, respectively. To meet the recommended density while providing high-quality and robust greenspace as well as a mixture of housing types and affordability, waiving one sidewalk along Private Roads D and E allows for additional area to be utilized towards the central amenity area block.

(ix) Waiving the requirement would enable different principles of the neighborhood model to be more fully achieved. Granting of this modification would allow for additional area within the Block 3 central greenspace and would allow for more flexibility in amenity space programming. Sidewalks are provided towards amenity areas and along public streets. As recommended by the Future Street Network in the Master Plan, Public Road C is proposed to fulfill a public road and bike-ped connection to the neighboring property, Wickham Pond, which is designated as Neighborhood Center. Intentional sidewalk design along public streets and common areas contribute to overall neighborhood connectivity between Montclair and the adjacent Neighborhood Center, Wickham Pond.

Please grant this request to allow the waiver of the requirement for sidewalks along both sides of Block 1, Private Road A and B and Block 3, Private Road D and E to enhance the overall connectivity of Montclair, as well as supporting the Crozet Master Plan's goals of residential density, mixture of housing types and affordability, bike-ped connectivity, and robust green and open space.



Legend

- Proposed Sidewalks
- Proposed Multiuse Path
- Proposed Building Envelope

100 0 100 200 300

Graphic Scale: 1"=100'

ZMA2020-12 Montclair Waiver Exhibit